

Marijuana is the most widely used illicit drug in the United States and tends to be the first illegal drug teens use. However, this is not to say that the majority of teens use marijuana. In fact, according to a 1994 survey of high school seniors, while 30.7% used marijuana sometime within the past year, 69.3% did not use marijuana. Additionally, most marijuana users do not go on to use other illegal drugs.

Marijuana has several negative physical and mental effects. Use of marijuana may impair or reduce short-term memory and comprehension, alter sense of time, and reduce ability to perform tasks requiring concentration and coordination, such as driving a car.

Some people find that marijuana can increase their appetites which may lead to

**gorging**

on junk food and possible weight gain.

Some people who are shy in social situations, who turn to marijuana to loosen up, frequently end up making fools of themselves and doing things that they regret.

## What are the short-term effects of using Marijuana?

- ☹ sleepiness and increased hunger
- ☼ difficulty keeping track of time, impaired or reduced short-term memory
- ✎ reduced ability to perform tasks requiring concentration and coordination, such as driving a car
- ✚ increased heart rate
- 📖 potential cardiac dangers for those with preexisting heart disease
- ☼ bloodshot eyes
- ⬇ decreased social inhibitions
- ✚ risk of paranoia, hallucinations, intense anxiety

## What are the long-term effects of using Marijuana?

- ✦ increased risk of chronic pulmonary disorders, including cancer
- ✱ decrease in testosterone levels for men
- ✉ increase in testosterone levels for women
- ✱ lower sperm counts and difficulty having children in men
- ✱ increased risk of infertility in women
- ✚ diminished or extinguished sexual pleasure
- ✂ psychological dependence requiring more of the drug to get the same effect

If you or someone you know has been using marijuana, there is help available. Talk to a school counselor, a friend, or a parent, and check the back of this pamphlet for some valuable resource information.

A recent study of 1,023 trauma patients admitted to a shock trauma unit (receiving only the most seriously injured accident victims), found that one-third had detectable levels of marijuana in their blood.